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EFFECTIVE VISUAL INSTRUCTION

A radio talk by Reuben Brigham, in charge regional contact section, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, delivered in the National 4-H Club radio program, September 1, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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Boys and girls of the 4-H Clubs and friends:

"Learn to do by doing" we say is the 4-H Club way. That is right. Yet, there is another way of getting new ideas and putting them to work that helps greatly. It is to "learn by seeing." There seems to be almost no end to the ways in which an idea can be presented for us to see and through seeing to learn.

Surely, learning by seeing makes for better understanding in these days when all who grow things on the farm are trying to see their problems as one and to work together to bring about more profitable production. In such a time the sharing of knowledge becomes quite as important as getting such knowledge for one's own use. That has long been one of the great lessons of 4-H Club work. So, today, more than ever the wide awake Club member realizes that more Club members and better informed Club members make his Club work much more valuable to him, as well as to them, and is keenly interested in every way of getting 4-H Club ideas to other boys and girls and to the other people in his community.

There are a good many ways of picturing ideas. As you probably know, the letters of the alphabet are only abbreviations of pictures of things or ideas. So it is entirely natural that what we call visual instruction can be very effective in presenting ideas that help us in our Club work. Our meetings are more useful when the right kind of pictures or charts or graphs are shown us to explain more strikingly the things we need to know. The circulars and bulletins we read are better understood when we find in them pictures and charts of a kind that take the place of the many words that would otherwise be needed. Motion pictures and exhibits, when well prepared, do their part in driving home the ideas that we need to use in improving our ways of doing things.

On the other hand, poor pictures or charts or graphs are worse than none at all. The effective illustration tells the story to be told clearly, simply, and strikingly. It requires few, if any, words, spoken or written, to accompany it. There is nothing in it that takes the eye or mind off of the one idea it is supposed to express. Otherwise, why use the picture or chart, or the exhibit? It would be better to do without it.

Taking photographs has proven a mighty good hobby for boys and girls who wanted to help 4-H Club work in their counties and to get Club ideas over to their neighbors. Take a dozen good pictures of members of a local 4-H Club busy at their Club work. Mount them on cardboard, with a short paragraph under each picture. Then place the display in the hall at school, in the bank, or in the store window. Thus you will give a lot of people

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a better idea of what Club work is and help them absorb Club ideas.

When your county agent gets together the best of a lot of such pictures from local 4-H Clubs all over the county and they are published on a page of your newspaper, a great many more people learn about 4-H Club work and 4-H Club ideas. It's a mighty successful way to get a lot of people to know about Club work and profit from such knowledge. They may never find their way to your homes and farms, but the pictures take you to them and tell them what you are doing.

Most of you know that a lantern slide is a photograph made transparent so that the image can be thrown on a screen in a darkened room. Lantern slides are bulky. They are rather expensive too. And, being made of glass, they break easily. One day an inventive soul got the idea of taking the same pictures from which glass slides were being made and putting a whole string of them on a strip of film a couple of feet long. Here and there, county agents, working with the local 4-H Clubs in the county, have brought together the best snapshots of what Club members of the county were doing and have made up a film strip about 4-H Club work in the county. They have shown these film strips at community meetings and so have given the people all over the county the best 4-H Club ideas. Certainly this is a good way to show many people what Club boys and girls are accomplishing.

Another good way that 4-H Club members are using to get their ideas before people is through posters. Some 4-H Clubs have poster contests with prizes for those members who get over a club idea in the most interesting and striking way. In some places, whole collections of posters exhibited in public places on achievement day are creating enthusiasm and interest for Club work. Then the winning poster, or posters, may be exhibited in the window of a bank or store, or it may be published in the local newspapers.

Whether it's photographs or posters or exhibits that you use to do the job, it's fun to picture 4-H Club ideas. In this way, you'll get new members. You'll strengthen the interest of old members. You'll win supporters for Club work among the older people of your neighborhood. And, you'll be doing your part in telling the story of the help and fun and enjoyment there is in 4-H Club work for every farm boy and girl. Why not try your hand?